



27 MAY 2021

Tēnā koe

On 21 April 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

1. *How many people are on the waitlist for a Kāinga ora home in NZ?*
2. *How many identify as Māori?*
3. *How many were on the housing waitlist at the same time last year?*
4. *How many people are on the waitlist for a home in Canterbury?*
5. *How many in Canterbury identify as Māori?*
6. *How many were on the Canterbury housing waitlist at the same time last year?*
7. *How does the housing waitlist work?*
8. *How much has MSD spent on emergency housing nationally in the last 12 months?*
9. *How much has MSD spent on emergency housing in Canterbury the last 12 months?*
10. *How many people are currently in emergency housing nationally?*
11. *How many people are currently in emergency housing nationally and identify as Māori?*
12. *How many people are currently in emergency housing in Canterbury?*
13. *How many people are currently in emergency housing in Canterbury and identify as Māori?*

On 27 April 2021, the Ministry received a transfer of your request to Kāinga Ora for the same set of questions. As such, you will receive one response under the Act addressing both requests.

Demand for housing across New Zealand is growing, and more people are experiencing a severe and immediate need. This demand is generated by a shortage of affordable housing driving up house prices and rents. People on low incomes are most affected by rising housing costs and many seek financial help through the Ministry.

The Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (EH SNG) is available to people who cannot remain in their usual place of residence, if any, and do not have access to other accommodation which is adequate for them or their family's needs. The Ministry pays EH SNGs directly to the accommodation supplier, and assistance is generally granted for up to seven nights but can be extended depending on the individual's circumstances.

The year 2020 saw a significant increase in demand for emergency housing, as the Ministry supported people through the COVID-19 pandemic period with accommodation where they could safely self-isolate. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, people also could not easily move out of emergency housing into long-term accommodation, which contributed to longer durations of stay and higher costs. Across government, there is a major programme of work underway aimed at increasing the supply of public housing and improving housing affordability and supply.

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development/HUD) and Kāinga Ora are responsible for increasing the supply of affordable and public housing. This includes planning, and with Kāinga Ora, delivering more public housing, transitional housing, and services to tackle homelessness. HUD is also working to improve housing affordability and supply for aspiring homeowners.

For clarity, I will be responding to question seven first, as it provides helpful context for the other questions, and the rest of your questions in turn.

7. How does the housing waitlist work?

When New Zealanders are in need of public housing, their needs are recorded on either the Housing Register or the Transfer Register. The combined register is referred to as the Public Housing Register (the Register). The Housing Register shows people who are not currently in public housing but who have been assessed as eligible for public housing. The Transfer Register shows people already in public housing but who have applied to be rehoused. More information about the Public Housing Register is available here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/index.html.

The Register is dynamic rather than static, and it changes as people's circumstances and situations change. Placing people and families into houses is about matching them with the right house in the area they want to live. This includes ensuring the family has the right number of bedrooms, is close to essential services such as schools, and that the accommodation meets any disability needs if appropriate. Those assessed as having the greater need for housing will be prioritised higher. As people's needs change, their priority on the Register may change also. As such, the length of time spent on the Register awaiting housing can vary significantly.

Each housing application is given a priority rating based on the Ministry's assessment of housing need, and all applications are measured against the same criteria to determine that priority rating. Applicants who are assessed as at risk (Priority A) or as having a serious housing need (Priority B) are placed on the Register until a house becomes available. The Ministry's role is to assess people's needs for public housing and if they or a family member need an accessible home, we capture that as part of the assessment process. Clients who are on the Register will be contacted on a regular basis to confirm their circumstances and are referred to public housing providers when suitable properties become available.

Further information regarding the assessment of a client's housing need, housing need priority ratings and the calculation of overall priority ratings can be found on the Work and Income website here: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/social-housing/assessment-of-eligibility/assessment-of-housing-need-01.html.

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4. *How many people are on the waitlist for a home in Canterbury?*
5. *How many in Canterbury identify as Maori?*
6. *How many were on the Canterbury housing waitlist at the same time last year?*

Please find **Table One** enclosed within **Appendix A** showing the number of people in Canterbury and the rest of New Zealand on the Register for the quarters ending 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2020. This data is broken down by the ethnicity of the applicants, between those who identify as Māori and the combined total of other recorded ethnicities (non-Māori).

To calculate the figures for Canterbury, the Ministry has used the following Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) which fall within the Canterbury region: Ashburton District, Christchurch City, Hurunui District, Kaikoura District, MacKenzie District, Selwyn District, Timaru District, Waimakariri District, Waimate District, and Waitaki District.

Please note, the ethnicity data is self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct. Clients are not required to provide the Ministry with their ethnicity, which is why an 'unspecified' option is included. In many cases, clients choose not to disclose their ethnicity.

In order to protect client confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. As such, the datasets provided to you have had random round to base three applied to the figures in the table. This means a value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.

The impact of random rounding is that the columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row total however, the published figures will never differ by more than two counts and still allow you to see trends.

The Ministry publishes a large amount of information regarding the Register online, including the current number of applicants on the Register, broken down by ethnicity. You can find information regarding the Register on the Ministry's website here: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/index.html#TheHousingRegistersincenbspDecember20182.

8. *How much has MSD spent on emergency housing nationally in the last 12 months?*
9. *How much has MSD spent on emergency housing in Canterbury the last 12 months?*

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also publishes a large amount of information regarding the EH SNG as part of the Housing Quarterly Report. This includes the total EH SNG amount granted as at each quarter ending, with the most recent being quarter ending 31 December 2020. This includes a regional breakdown of the EH SNG amount granted. As such, these aspects of your request are refused under section 18(d) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is already publicly available.

HUD's Housing Quarterly Report can be found here: www.hud.govt.nz/community-and-public-housing/follow-our-progress/.

Again, in the spirit of being helpful, I have also outlined the total EH SNG amount granted both nationally and for Canterbury for the last 12 months below.

Quarter Ending	EH SNG amount granted (\$ million) for all of New Zealand	EH SNG amount granted (\$ million) for Canterbury
31 December 2020	82.5	2.6
31 September 2020	83.0	2.8
30 June 2020	79.3	1.5
31 March 2020	54.1	1.7

10. How many people are currently in emergency housing nationally?
11. How many people are currently in emergency housing nationally and identify as Māori?
12. How many people are currently in emergency housing in Canterbury?
13. How many people are currently in emergency housing in Canterbury and identify as Māori?

Please find **Table Two** enclosed within **Appendix A**, showing the number of distinct clients in receipt of EH SNG's for the quarters ending 31 March 2021 and 31 December 2020. The quarter ending 31 December 2020 has been provided to align with the publicly available information you have been referred to above. This includes the number of grants approved for those who identify as Māori, and for the Canterbury region.

Again, the ethnicity data is self-identified based on an individual's preference or self-construct and in many cases, clients may choose not to disclose their ethnicity.

Furthermore, in order to protect client confidentiality, the Ministry has again used processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data. As such, the datasets provided to you have had random round to base three applied to the figures in the table. This means a value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.

The impact of random rounding is that the columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row total however, the published figures will never differ by more than two counts and still allow you to see trends.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider

public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for information regarding the Public Housing Register and Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



 Karen Hocking
General Manager
Housing

Appendix A

Table One: The number of applicants on the Public Housing Register for Canterbury and the rest of New Zealand for quarters ending 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2021, broken down by clients who identify as Māori and clients who identify as other ethnicities (non-Māori)

Region / Quarter by Ethnic Group	31-March-2020			31-March-2021		
	Māori	Non-Māori	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Total
Canterbury	507	996	1,500	885	1,671	2,556
Rest of NZ	8,814	9,306	18,120	12,801	12,822	25,623
Grand Total	9,321	10,302	19,620	13,683	14,493	28,179

Table Two: The number of distinct clients in receipt of the Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants for Canterbury and the rest of New Zealand for quarters ending 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2021, broken down by clients who identify as Māori and clients who identify as other ethnicities (non-Māori)

Region / Quarter by Ethnic Group	December 2020			March 2021		
	Māori	Non-Māori	Total	Māori	Non-Māori	Total
Canterbury	253	317	570	213	323	536
Rest of NZ	4,626	3,307	7,933	4,286	3,201	7,487
Grand Total	4,879	3,624	8,503	4,499	3,524	8,023

Notes for Tables One and Two

- Emergency Housing assistance payments are granted as Special Needs Grants (EH SNG).
- A client can have more than one grant in the time period.
- Clients can be counted more than once if they have a grant in more than one region in a quarter.
- For this reason, the sum of distinct clients by region will be different from the total distinct clients.
- Clients can be counted in multiple quarters if they have grants in more than one quarter.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry of Social Development uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- A value of one or two may be rounded to zero or three.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.
- Ethnicity data is self-identified and multiple ethnicities may be chosen by an individual as fits their preference or self-concept.
- Please note the ethnicity classification that is used to construct this table does not necessarily align with the current Statistics New Zealand classification of ethnicity.
- Ethnicity details recorded by the Ministry have been gathered under a variety of classification methods as clients come into contact with the Ministry.
- Territorial Local Authority (TLA) is estimated based on the clients address at the time of the grant. It may not be the same as the address of the emergency housing provider.
- We have defined Canterbury TLAs as Ashburton District, Christchurch City, Hurunui District, Kaikoura District, Mackenzie District, Selwyn District, Timaru District, Waimakariri District, Waimate District, Waitaki District.